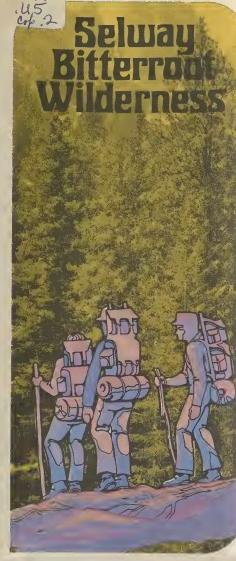


## **Historic, archived document**

**Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices**





notes

## take nothing but pictures leave nothing but tracks

If you use the Wilderness properly, the person who follows will never know you were there. Neither law nor administrative edict can save this Wilderness from human carelessness. Unless those passing through are considerate, the Wilderness scene will ultimately fade and disappear. The visitor's impact has already increased to the extent that restrictions on camping, grazing and other activities may become necessary to protect these popular areas from permanent damage.

Visitors are requested to fill out registration cards provided at major Wilderness entrances. These cards, which provide information about the number of people visiting, their destinations and hometown addresses, help the District Ranger better meet your needs and preserve the Wilderness resources.

The use of all types of motorized equipment, including snowmobiles, chain saws, generators and trail bikes, is prohibited by law in the Wilderness. The following exceptions for aircraft are permitted: Landing fields at Moose Creek, Shearer and Fish Lake are open to aircraft. Landing strips are recommended for use only by pilots skilled in mountain takeoffs and landings.

## camping

Suitable camping sites are generally abundant. To help maintain the Wilderness solitude, locate your camp

at least 100 feet from lakes, streams and trails. Please avoid campsites which have obviously been heavily used. You may cut dead or down trees for tent poles and firewood. Remove all temporary camp facilities when breaking camp. Always keep and leave a clean camp.

Most soil within the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness is granite in origin. As a result, plant cover is easily disturbed and often destroyed. Herbaceous plants are infested by man and animal droppings. Herbs are damaged by man and animal droppings. Herbs are damaged by man and animal droppings.

Wilderness is man's heritage. A good woodsmen who really understands the Wilderness concept and has developed a Wilderness ethic, takes pride in leaving little evidence of his stay. The following guidelines will help minimize man's impact on the Wilderness:

- Select an area screened from trails, lakes and campsites for loading and unloading pack stock.
- Erect temporary pole or rope hitchbacks when tying stock for extended periods.
- Scatter concentrations of manure when breaking camp.
- Natural forage is scarce. Use pelleted feed as the main diet for pack and saddle animals. The use of pelleted feed will aid in preventing the spread of weeds and non-native seeds found in hay.
- Move animals frequently when grazing on natural forage. This will maintain a relatively ungrazed appearance.
- Ride single file and at a walking gait. Avoid shortcuts across meadows or switchbacks. Yield the right-of-way to faster moving trail and horseback riders only. When yielding, avoid abrupt movements and loud talking and do not touch passing animals. Carry hand tools suitable for removing wind-thrown trees from trails. Single riders or hikers should yield to pack strings.



## nature and wildlife

Wildlife is abundant in the Wilderness area. A variety of small birds inhabit the forest, sharing that home with the larger, more conspicuous fowl. The large water ouzel may be found along streams, feeding on aquatic insects. Also, the visitor will probably spot the marmot, marten, fisher, bobcat, coyote, porcupine, mountain chickadee, Canada lynx, Sitka jay, northern flicker, woodpecker, crow, raven, eagle, osprey, falcon, blue grouse, ruffed grouse, Franklin's grouse, hawk and owl. Rainbow, cutthroat, brook and Dolly Varden trout can be found in many of the lakes and streams. The Selway River and its tributaries provide natural spawning beds for chinook salmon and steelhead trout.

## the area

The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, a vast and varied area of rugged terrain, provides the Montana-Idaho border. The largest federally designated Wilderness in the Continental United States, it contains 1.25 million acres. Elevations range from 7,500 to 10,000 feet above sea level. If the weather is severe in the high country of the Bitterroot Range or the Selway crags, you can retreat to the warmer, more protected lower Selway River. There is a wide variety of wildlife and scenic beauty.

About 125 lakes dot the Wilderness, many of them in spectacular glacial cirques. Although glaciers have long since receded, a number of small, perpetual snowbanks remain. Sparkling streams cascade down steep wooded canyons, carrying nearly three billion acre-feet of water yearly to the Bitterroot, Selway and Lochsa rivers.

The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness is named after the area's two major physiographic features — the Selway River and the Bitterroot Mountains. The name "Selway" is from the word "Selwah," which is the Nez Perce Indian language means "smooth water." The mountain range was named for the delicate Bitterroot flower. The Bitterroot, first explored by "Lewisia Rediviva" by explorer Meriwether Lewis in 1805, is Montana's state flower.

The Indians made little use of the area. Their trails, linking the Clearwater Valley with the Bitterroot Valley, are the only signs of early Indian life in this rugged terrain of the Bitterroot divide. Summer encampments were along the upper Selway, Lower Bear Creek and Moose Creek drainages. In these areas the Indians fished for the abundant ocean run salmon and steelhead trout and hunted the natural mineral licks for deer and elk.

Trappers worked a major portion of the area. You

can still see the remains of many of their old line cabins. Also, you might notice martin sets notched in trees. The design of these structures varied with the individual trapper from simple notches to elaborate structures with a rectangular notch. Trapping the area was not an easy task, however, as fur trappers braved the dead of winter in search of pelts. One trapper, known only as Archer, died while running his trapline on skis. The end of his fall down a precipitous slope is marked by his grave.

A few homesteaders moved into the Selway River and Moose Creek drainages after the land was opened to settlement in 1908. The first to settle that year was Henry Peterson. He built a cabin near the site of the present Selway Lodge, made some crude improvements and raised some livestock. He is buried on a small bench overlooking the land he loved. Eight more homesteaders moved in between 1912 and 1916. All but one remained in the Moose Creek area, beginning what might have been a small settlement. But time and the hardship of packing supplies over 40 to 60 miles of treacherous, unpaved roads forced all but a few to give up and move away. Five of the original homesteads remain in private ownership.

Early settlers constructed many small storage dams on the high mountain lakes. Many are still in use today, providing late season water for irrigation.

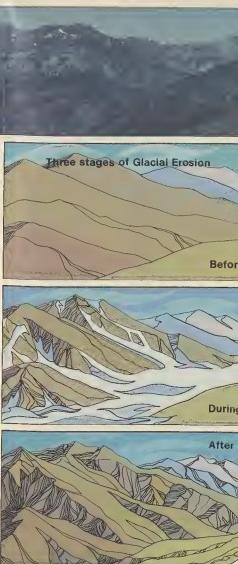
The Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area was established by the Forest Service in 1932. After a study and several public hearings, the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Act in 1963 established the present Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Passage of the Wilderness Act on September 3, 1964, the area became part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 further protects all lands along the Selway River from any development or manmade disturbance.



## our wilderness heritage

In a Wilderness you can find solitude, a detachment from normal cares and responsibilities, and a renewal of your place with nature. The Wilderness provides opportunities for recreation and challenges as well as an opportunity for scientific studies.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 states: "A Wilderness in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor and does not remain."



## geology

This Wilderness lies almost entirely within the Idaho Batholith — an area where molten rock from deep within the earth has intruded into existing metamorphic rocks. This process took several million years, ending about 65 million years ago.

Metamorphic rocks were formed when sediments, laid down at the bottom of inland seas in prehistoric times more than 600 million years ago, were altered by heat and pressure. Batholith rocks and the older metamorphics are found throughout the area.

Some geologists believe the large blocks of mountain country extending from the Bitterroot Mountains for about 100 miles is still being uplifted. It is also being eroded and shaped into the landforms we see today. The deep, steep-walled canyons are the result of extensive downcutting. In addition, recent glaciation above 5,000 feet has produced the U-shaped valleys, cirques, lakes and pools, cirque headways, moraines and polished areas.

Large cracks or joints can be found in some of the exposed granite rocks. These are caused by "pressure release jointing" as overlying rock is eroded away and pressure on the rock is released.

Surface and ground water in many places has decomposed the feldspar crystals in the batholith rock, forming the "grus" or rotten granite, which can be crumbled by hand. The more resistant quartz crystals remain relatively intact.

## management

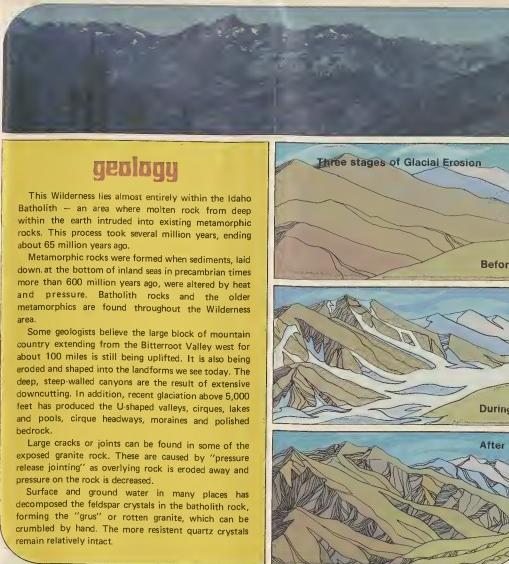
The Forest Service bears with pride its Wilderness stewardship responsibility in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Four national forests and seven ranger districts have some share in protecting the Wilderness resource of the area. They are charged with the responsibility to preserve its primeval character and influence. The Wilderness areas are managed so that their educational, scientific, scenic and recreational values are protected.

## weather and seasons

People visit this Wilderness throughout the year. The lower elevations, along the Selway River, remain free of snow from mid-March through November. Snowstorms may occur in September at higher elevations. Trails at altitudes above 5,000 feet are usually free of snow from July through mid-October. Early spring travelers should be prepared for high, fast water at most stream crossings. Forks on the Selway River are impossible at this time.

## winter travel

Make certain you receive the latest weather condition information and make thorough preparations prior to beginning a winter trip into the Wilderness. Avalanche paths are common and have left slide paths in most drainages. A pamphlet, "Snow Avalanches," is available at the Clearwater National Forest headquarters, Orofino, Idaho; Nez Perce National Forest headquarters, Grangeville, Idaho, and the Bitterroot National Forest headquarters, Hamilton, Montana. It contains suggestions for avoiding and surviving avalanches.



## plant life

Flowers bloom at various elevations through the summer and first begin to dot the landscape as the snowbanks retreat. Late in July, buttercups, shooting stars and trillium flourish high on the mountains where growing conditions are harsh.

Majestic stands of Ponderosa Pine are found at most lower elevations. Along Moose and Bear creeks, summer visitors enjoy the refreshing shade of the stately cedars.



## forest supervisors

Bitterroot National Forest  
Hamilton, Montana 89840  
Phone: 406-863-3111

Clearwater National Forest  
Orofino, Idaho 83544  
Phone: 208-776-4541

Nez Perce National Forest  
Moscow, Montana 83841  
Phone: 406-849-6511

Shoshone National Forest  
Grangeville, Idaho 83530  
Phone: 208-983-1930

Spokane National Forest  
Spokane, Idaho 83877

Stevensville Ranger Station  
Hamilton, Montana 89840  
Phone: 406-773-5441

St. Joe Ranger Station  
Grangeville, Idaho 83530  
Phone: 208-982-4229

Wood Creek Ranger Station  
Kooskia, Idaho 83530  
Phone: 208-982-4229

Wallowa Ranger Station  
Ely City, Idaho 83530  
Phone: 208-942-2155

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest  
Wallowa Falls, Oregon 97843  
Phone: 503-925-1745

Whitefish Ranger Station  
Whitefish, Montana 59937  
Phone: 406-752-2649

Yellowstone National Park  
West Yellowstone, Montana 59758  
Phone: 406-587-2100

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